The NHS Highland board has approved a plan that sets out its strategic direction for the next few years.

Presented by its chief executive Elaine Mead, the NHS Highland Strategic Quality and Sustainability Plan: 2017/18 to 2019/20 was endorsed at the meeting on Tuesday 28th March 2017.

The intention is that the plan will provide the blueprint by which the board will meet the ‘unprecedented’ saving targets of around £100 million over the next three years.

Aside from the financial pressures, Elaine told the board that there are more compelling reasons why its models of care must change.

She said that an ageing population, changing workforce, difficulties with recruitment, staffing pressures, as well as rising costs and demands, all signal that NHS Highland must accelerate changes to the way it delivers its services.

She said: “It is clear that our current model of health and social care is not sustainable and as pressures grow, we are going to have to provide services in a different way.”

Her report outlined both the challenges and some of the solutions - including new models of care - that will help sustain the board’s services between now and 2020.

Over the next three years it is estimated that NHS Highland will need to deliver efficiencies of around £100 million, with around £47 million in 2017/18 (around 7 per cent of the

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Board approves strategic plan...

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board’s annual budget that year).

Elaine Mead said: “Our Quality and Sustainability Plan describes the national and local strategic context, and sets out a compelling case for change as well as NHS Highland’s approach to addressing some of the challenges.

“The plan sets out the vision and strategy through which to deliver the board’s corporate objectives. We are putting in place seven initiatives that relate back to people, quality and care.

“These will support the reduction of waste, harm and unwarranted variation, allow new models of care to be further developed and introduced and, in turn, will be more sustainable.”

These seven initiatives identified are themed under the following main headings: Adult care, Flow, New models of care, Realistic medicine, Drug costs, Remodelling assets and Continuous Quality Improvement/Local Initiatives.

Yet while she warned that meeting the challenges ahead will not be easy, Elaine Mead pointed to the good work that board has already done in these areas.

She said: “Significant redesign on models of care are ongoing from previous years such as out-of-hours, transforming out-patients, an office redesign and major service redesign and elements of these will be completed during 2017/18.”

And she said NHS Highland has a good track record of realising savings through initiatives related to procurement, prescribing and quality improvement.

She said: “Although NHS Highland is well placed to deliver the new approaches, this will be challenging. The biggest hurdle is how best to speed up the pace of change while at the same time taking staff, communities and partners with us.

“Providing ‘more of the same approach’ is not going to be sufficient.”

Detailed plans setting out specific initiatives for each of the operational units and corporate services will be brought back to the board in May.

As well as raising awareness about the plan in general, communications and engagement plans will be put in place for specific pieces of work.

Meanwhile, the board also approved a list of projects, worth about £235 million, over the next five years. Subject to approval from the Scottish Government, this includes the refurbishment of the Grantown health Centre, an extension to Caithness General Hospital, the redevelopment of Raigmore Hospital, and new facilities on Skye.

Continued from front

For Lizbeth Collie’s commute: See page 8
Ambulance investment plans

Plans to increase ambulance provision in Caithness have been announced by the Scottish Ambulance Service and NHS Highland.

The £400,000 investment follows a review showing an increase in inter-hospital transfers between Caithness General Hospital and Raigmore Hospital in Inverness.

Scottish Ambulance Service chief executive Pauline Howie said: “We are delighted to have agreed significant investment with NHS Highland to increase our resources in Caithness and help ensure patients receive access to the highest possible levels of care.

“This funding complements wider investment across the North of Scotland in response to changing patient needs and access to more specialist health service delivery.

Dr Richard Mounce and Dr Steve Wright, research fellows at the Centre for Transport Research at the University of Aberdeen, will begin their research on Skye on Monday 3rd April 2017.

This work is a key requirement of the redesign process. It will look at the impact (positive or negative) of any changes to healthcare services the board provides in the area.

The Aberdeen team will assess this impact by reviewing activity data, questionnaires from local transport providers and hospital patient surveys.

The field work will involve Dr Mounce and Dr Wright meeting various representatives from local community transport providers, NHS Highland staff, and conducting in-patient and visitor surveys.

Dr Mounce said: “We have already done some of the ground work for the project to take place, with help from NHS Highland. Questionnaires have been distributed to local transport operators on Skye in order to gather information about what transport options are available to people who need to access the Portree and Broadford hospitals. In-patient surveys have also recently been initiated to gather information about how in-patients and their visitors access the hospitals.”

After the week-long field work, the assessment is to be completed by the end of May and then presented to NHS Highland as well as the Transport and Access Group chaired by Councillor Hamish Fraser.

Welcoming this research, Cllr Fraser said: “I hope the outcome will potentially enhance the transport services available presently. The geography of the Skye, Lochalsh and Wester Ross catchment area, makes the area difficult to serve, particularly within the limits of the present public transport provision at all levels.

“The work of the Transport and Access Group has been difficult to date and this professionally led research will hopefully find a way round those difficulties and allow the redesign of Health and Social Care services to move on to provide a sustainable service for the locality for many years to come.”

Dr Mounce and Dr Wright have considerable experience in this field and have already conducted another similar study for NHS Highland on its Badenoch and Strathspey Community Transport redesign.

Dr Mounce said: “We will be doing an assessment of the implications of changes to health provision on transport. In particular, we will be focusing on the impacts of moving all in-patient care to Broadford, such as how people in the north of Skye who don’t have a car will access the hospital.”
**Week-long campaign plans to improve care**

**NHS HIGHLAND** staff, patients, and visitors were asked to take part in a ground breaking initiative called “Breaking the Rules for Better Care”.

Run by the European arm of the Institute of Healthcare Improvement, the idea behind “Breaking the Rules for Better Care” Week was to let the board’s management know about “non-sensical” or “silly” rules that hinder the delivery of high quality care.

The first-ever “Breaking the Rules for Better Care” Week run by the Health Improvement Alliance Europe (HIAE) took place from Monday 27th March to Friday 31st March.

During the week in all the board’s care settings, staff and students were asked to highlight what rules related to workflow and processes they would like to change - and why. The aim is to start the conversation to provide better healthcare for patients.

In addition, patients, friends, families and visitors were also asked to identify what rules relating to the patient and family experience they would like changed.

Nothing was considered sacred. If people think the rules ‘just don’t make sense’ or ‘get in the way of patient-centred care’, then the board wanted to know - whether they are big ideas or just small little changes.

During “Breaking the Rules for Better Care” Week, suggestions were invited about things like waiting times or visiting hours, when to cancel patient procedures, or even what type of drinks were available in hospital shops.

By staff, patients and visitors questioning ‘why things are done in certain ways’ - whether because of habit, age old and outdated policies or procedures - the board hopes to sweep away barriers to high quality care.

Announcing the initiative, chief executive, Elaine Mead, said: “We have been invited to participate in “Breaking the Rules for Better Care” Week as one of a number of organisations across Europe who want their staff to help improve the healthcare they provide.”

“The reason that we are participating is because we need, now more than ever, to be able to highlight the well-intentioned rules, habits, policies and procedure that sometimes get in the way of our staff delivering high quality care in a timely way.

“During this week, I asked our staff to think about the rules that they feel get in the way of them and their teams providing great healthcare. Or rules that compromise the experience of care for both them and our service users.

“Be clear, I don’t want our staff to break the rules just yet. I just wanted them, and our patients and visitors, to take a few moments to send their thoughts to this email address: high-uhb.breakingtherules@nhs.net. We will then collate all of the comments into themes.”

Elaine said that after the week, all the views expressed would be collated and posted on the board’s website.

She added: “The idea is that we will then have rules that we now believe should be broken and will start work immediately on removing them.

“I know that this might be a strange request, but it is an opportunity for our staff – and our patients and visitors - to clearly flag, directly to me, some of the things that they believe hold us back from delivering great healthcare.

“I look forward to hearing about the rules that the staff, patients or relatives would like me to ‘break or make’ for better care.”

During the week, people were encouraged to send their thoughts and suggestions to a dedicated email address.

It is hoped the collective response will prove to be a powerful tool to help promote policy changes that will lead to better care at NHS Highland.
NEW ARRANGEMENTS MADE FOR CAITHNESS DAY CARE SERVICES

NHS HIGHLAND has confirmed that local care provider Laurandy has been awarded the contract to deliver its day care services in Wick, taking over from the current provider Alzheimer Scotland.

In addition, the service run by Alzheimer Scotland in Thurso will now be run by NHS Highland. The new arrangements will take effect from the beginning of May 2017.

Laurandy is a well-established day care service provider in Wick with skilled staff who have many years’ experience in looking after individuals with adults with dementia and other physical and mental conditions. The company will take on the running of the Longberry Unit in Pulteney House, and this will include the staff transferring over from Alzheimer Scotland.

Commenting on the new arrangements Michelle Johnstone, NHS Highland’s area manager covering Caithness and Sutherland, said: “As the contract for day care was up for a review, we took the chance to consider what care and support is required going forward.”

DEMENTIA CHAMPIONS

EIGHT MEMBERS of staff from NHS Highland joined health and social services professionals from across Scotland as graduates of a pioneering programme that aims to improve the care of people with dementia in hospital.

Five graduates of the Dementia Champions programme - Paul Dillon, staff nurse, County Community Hospital, Invergordon, Ashley MacLennan, healthcare support worker, Raigmore Hospital, Catriona Mandica, staff nurse, Raigmore, Karen Thurgo, staff nurse, Ian Charles Memorial Hospital, Grantown on Spey, and Rachel Whelan, staff nurse, Belford Hospital – attended a graduation ceremony last month.

Three other staff members, - Helen Craig, staff nurse, and Claire MacDonald, staff nurse, from Raigmore Hospital, and Chrisann O’Halloran, senior charge nurse, at the Portree and Broadford Hospitals on Skye – also graduated, but were unfortunately unable to attend on the day.

The event was held at Edinburgh’s Murrayfield Stadium on Wednesday 15th March 2017.

Pat Tyrrell, NHS Highland’s deputy director of nursing said: “All of our Dementia Champions are working to improve the care and support for people with dementia across the acute and community hospitals in Highland. Our new graduates will join the existing group of champions and I am delighted to say that they are doing really valuable work in fulfilling that role.”

The graduates were part of a group - or cohort - of around 130 health professionals that graduated this year. This seventh cohort will bring the number of Dementia Champions in Scotland to over 700 since the programme began in 2010. The idea of the training is to give each champion the necessary tools to bring about improvements in the experiences and outcomes of care and treatment for people with dementia.

A further nine participants from NHS Highland for the next programme of training, Cohort 8, which will start this month. Scotland has had a national Dementia Strategy in place since 2010 and the third Strategy for 2017 to 2020 is expected to be launched in May.

Ruth Mantle, the Alzheimer Scotland dementia nurse consultant for NHS Highland said: “The dementia champion programme continues to utilise the most-up-to-date evidence and research to support practice with caregivers and people with dementia contributing to the teaching. The board now has over 45 Dementia Champions.”
Thursday 11th May 2017
9.00am – 4.30pm

Being Here legacy event
Centre for Health Science, Inverness

A legacy event to celebrate and share learning from the Being Here initiative. Please book early as places for this event are limited.

The career ladder isn’t the only thing you’ll climb.

Project Aims:
Using these four key work-streams to establish new ways of working in order to provide workforce stability, community resilience and data for qualitative/economic evaluation.

Recruitment & Retention
Community Resilience
Research & Evaluation

To book your place, email: nhshighland.beinghere@nhs.net
Weekend dining

FROM THE end of April the dining room at Raigmore Hospital will no longer be open for sit-in meals and/or takeaway over Saturdays and Sundays.

The main entrance coffee bar in the hospital will now have extended hours over the weekends opening from 8am until 6pm meaning staff and visitors can still get hot breakfast rolls in the morning and there will also be a hot dish served at lunchtime for those who require it.

These changes will take place from 29th April 2017.

Focused training

TWO NHS Highland staff led specialist adult support and protection training for social care professionals from across Scotland last month.

Les Hood, the health board’s training officer for adult support and protection, and senior social worker Kirsty Stobo, provided a Highland perspective at a two-day event in Stirling.

The event focused on Adult Support and Protection Banning Orders and Les and Kirsty’s training centred on Banning Orders and evidencing undue pressure.

Cancer diagnosis

DATA COLLECTION is now open for the national cancer diagnosis audit run by joint Cancer Research UK, Macmillan Cancer Support and Royal College of General Practitioners, and supported by NHS Scotland in the 2016 Scottish cancer strategy. The deadline for data collection is 31st May 2017.

Participating practices will receive analysis feedback to support quality improvement activity for appraisal, revalidation and quality improvement activity. Health Boards with a significant number of participating practices can also receive analysis feedback.

Migdale awarded top marks for environment

THE VERY good quality environment offered to cancer and palliative care patients at a Sutherland Hospital has been recognised with a prestigious UK award.

The Migdale Hospital in Bonar Bridge, which treats many types of cancers for local patients, received the Macmillan Quality Environment Mark (MQEM) after a rigorous assessment of its services and facilities in February.

The inspection by assessors from the Macmillan Cancer Support charity gave the hospital a 4 ‘very good’ grade.

The award - valid for three years - is part of the charity’s scheme that assesses whether facilities meet the standards it believes is required by people living with cancer to provide enhanced outcomes for patients.

The hospital will now be presented with a MQEM award plaque that it can display in its reception area.

The plaque signifies that patients at the Migdale can expect a place that is ‘welcoming and accessible to all, respects their privacy and dignity, supports their comfort and well-being, gives them choice and personal control, and listens to their voice’.

Before the assessment, Migdale’s senior charge nurse Debbie Sutherland, collected a significant portfolio of evidence including information regarding engagement with people visiting and using the hospital.

She said: “We are so delighted with this news following our inspection. All of us at Migdale work hard to ensure that we provide the best possible environment for cancer patients while being treated in our care.

“And I’d like to thank everyone here at the Migdale who have done so much to help us be recognised for creating such a ‘homely’, welcoming and supportive environment for our patients.”

The award aims to ensure that people affected by cancer are treated and supported in physical environments of uniformly high quality.

Wick branch of Royal British Legion Scotland have donated £400 to the memory garden fund at the Wick Town and County Hospital. The cheque was handed over by branch treasurer Bev McPhee to charge nurse Iain McHardy. Looking on are, from left, branch committee members: Tommy Harper, Ken Swanson, John Mackenzie, and Alex Paterson, along with student nurse Julia Szewczyk, bank auxiliary nurse Edell Durrand, domestic assistant Ann Wilson and auxiliary nurse Carol Duncan.
We continue our regular series about how our staff travel to work. This month, one of NHS Highland’s new travel arrangement officers Lizbeth Collie reflects on her daily commute from Muir of Ord.

Variety is the ‘spice of life’ to keep your commute interesting

THEY SAY that variety is the spice of life and that is something Lizbeth Collie would agree with – especially when it comes to commuting to work.

For the NHS Highland active travel engagement officer uses a range of methods of transport to get to and from work each day in Inverness.

And she said that she is using her daily commute to get to know more about the Highland capital.

She said: “I live two-miles up a steep hill in Muir of Ord and I travel to work in different ways. I’ve lived in the Highlands for 20 years but I’ve never worked in Inverness before, so transport routes were a bit of a mystery if I’m honest.

“Coming into this part of town three or four times a week has been interesting. I’ve been experimenting with ways of commuting including lift-sharing with both my husband and a neighbour, and catching the train.

“I have been jumping on the train to Inverness, then cycling to Assynt House, I have walked between the station and the office and made use of the 10-minute bus service to Raigmore. I like variety in my life and my commute to work is no different.”

Lizbeth was recently appointed alongside colleague Sheila Wickens to inform NHS Highland’s active travel policies and support staff to make behaviour changes in commuting and business travel.

And she is keen to encourage colleagues to think differently about their daily commute.

“Many people don’t have the time to exercise with modern life and pressures,” she said. “However I would encourage people to ask themselves if they can get their exercise as part of their commute or business travel.

“After I travel to work in the morning I feel refreshed and energised and ready for the day and I can unwind on the way home. Whether cycling, walking, using public transport or lift-sharing, I am more relaxed having not spent most of the morning stuck in traffic or trying to find a parking space.

“What I enjoy the most is the spectacular view the train journey offers me each day. The other day there was snow on Ben Wyvis and the sun was shining – it was glorious. I was also able to chat to friends, read the paper and catch up on some work ahead of getting into the office.

“There are so many benefits to active travel. I would encourage colleagues to leave the car at home, even one or two days a week. You’ll be surprised how much you enjoy it.”

I would encourage colleagues to leave the car at home, even one or two days a week. You’ll be surprised how much you enjoy it.
A SOCIAL WORKER from NHS Highland has been recognised at this year’s Scottish Association of Social Work awards. Diana Morrow (pictured above) a social worker with the NHS Highland’s Easter Ross Community Mental Health Team received a Special Award for Recognition by Users of Services.

NHS Highland’s director of adult social care Joanna MacDonald said: “On behalf of NHS Highland I would like to congratulate Diana and thank her for all her hard work. “Diana is a shining example of everything that a social worker should aspire to be. She is friendly, approachable, compassionate and dedicated to the people she works with. Diana always treats people with dignity and respect and she is held in very high regard by colleagues and service users. “I am delighted that Diana has been recognised for her contribution to social work and the wider Easter Ross community.”

One service user said: “Every time we meet up she has been very polite, respectful of how I feel, supports me to make realistic goals and encourages me to keep them. I believe we need thousands more like her.”

Meanwhile, another Highland social worker, Ailsa Rainnie, from the Highland Council’s family team in Fort William, was named Social Worker of the Year.

A REMOTE pharmaceutical service from an office base in Dingwall that services GP practices in Lochaber has been recognised at this year’s Scottish Pharmacist Awards winning the eHealth and Innovation in Pharmacy Practice Award.

NHS Highland’s North and West Operational Unit were the brains behind this project which took two years to set up.

Patricia Hannam, primary care clinical pharmacist, explained that delivering care close to the person’s own home in a remote and rural area like the Highlands had encouraged them to look at different ways of delivering the service.

She said: “Remote delivery of care, using information and communication technologies, was seen as a solution that could enable sustainable pharmaceutical care to be provided to these remote and rural communities.

“In 2015 as a direct follow-on from previous NHS 24 work with a dementia outreach service we created a pharmacist post to set-up and deliver a remote medication review service to four care homes in Lochaber from an office base in Dingwall. “We engaged with the local Lochaber community which included care homes, GP surgeries and community pharmacies as well as working with NHS Highland’s own eHealth department and the Scottish Government allowing us to set up remote access to GP practice systems.”

A primary care clinical pharmacist performs six-monthly medication reviews, a critical examination of a patient’s medications, for care home residents in Lochaber. This helps optimise the impact of medicines, minimises the number of medication-related problems and reduces waste.

The pilot project conducted by Patricia showed that pharmaceutical care can be delivered remotely via remote medication review clinics. It also showed that having pharmaceutical care delivered in this way is acceptable to both patients and carers in the care home setting.

Patricia added: “Establishing a remote pharmacy service gives us a level of sustainability and a way in which we can provide pharmaceutical cover at short notice or for extended staff leave and also ease the pressure felt with difficulties of recruitment and retention to these remote and rural areas.”
CAITHNESS

Liaison role

THE CAITHNESS Maternity and Gynaecology Group confirmed that they had put in place arrangements to pilot a new role of liaison officer at Raigmore Hospital.

The liaison officer will begin work on Monday 3rd April and the role will be shaped by the group members, which includes ex-midwife and current Caithness Health Action Team (CHAT) member Liz More.

Members of the group also volunteered to lead work streams to improve access to accommodation at Raigmore; provide better transport arrangements, and improve the ‘care experience’ for expectant mums and their families.

Linda Malik, secretary of Tannach and District Community Council and the Association of Community Councils agreed to be one of the co-leads to spearhead influencing improvements in transport arrangements.

She said: “I was delighted to hear the announcement yesterday about the additional investment to support transport. It will be important that we make the best use this additional resource. “I am keen that we look at all our transport resources and not just the ambulance service to make sure we improve our local options.”

The meeting heard that work is also underway on a Patient Group Directive (a protocol that allows nurses and midwives to give some prescription medicines) for the use of pain relief medication during labour.

The makeup of the group include representatives from community councils, CHAT, Scottish Ambulance Service, NHS Highland staff, Breast Feeding peer volunteers and members of the public.

Dr Lucy Caird, consultant obstetrician from Raigmore Hospital who will provide medical leadership for the Caithness Maternity Unit and local GP Alison Brooks were also in attendance and answered clinical queries at the meeting.

An independent chair is still being sought. To find out more, contact Maimie Thompson, head of PR and engagement at maimie.thompson@nhs.net or 01463 704722.

SVQ ASSESSORS

Business manager makes renewed efforts to recruit

NHS HIGHLAND is making a renewed effort to encourage staff to become assessors and internal verifiers to enable the delivery of Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs) across a range of clinical and non-clinical services throughout Highland.

This month, we talk to newly qualified assessor Lynn Lawrence, business manager of Raigmore Hospital’s pharmacy department about why she signed up to become an SVQ assessor and the benefits for her staff.

Q. What made you decide to complete the training to be an SVQ assessor?

A. It became clear that there were few known opportunities for admin and clerical colleagues in terms of professional development. I had completed three SVQ qualifications starting in 2005 and I asked my admin and clerical colleagues within pharmacy if they would be interested in finding out more about the business and administration SVQ qualifications, which are nationally recognised.

At the time, NHS Highland had just taken the business and administration SVQ qualifications in-house, however there was a shortage of work-based assessors available to assess, so anyone who was interested in starting their SVQ would be put on a waiting list. I was very keen to get colleagues in pharmacy started with their qualifications as soon as possible, so I volunteered my services.

Q. What is involved in becoming an SVQ assessor?

A. I had to guide two colleagues through their SVQ units in addition to completing my own individual SVQ unit to gain my assessor award. It is additional work on top of your own day-to-day work schedule, however I believed a lot of managers would be keen to help colleagues get started with their SVQ.

Q. Would you recommend becoming an assessor to your colleagues?

A. Definitely. Staff should always have the opportunity to enhance their personal and professional development should they wish. I believe that further training and education shouldn’t be restricted because of your job or career. The only thing that was initially preventing my colleagues from undertaking their award was the lack of trained assessors.

The SVQ assessor qualification is a great addition to your C.V. but most importantly for me it was about giving my colleagues in pharmacy an opportunity to gain an award as a recognition of the job they are undertaking.

Q. And what would you say to staff who may be interested in undertaking SVQ training?

A. I think its worthwhile speaking to your line manager about the process of applying to undertake an SVQ. There are a wide variety of different SVQ awards available. The work involved in achieving the award can mostly be undertaken during working hours as the evidence you are providing links-in with your day-to-day job roles and responsibilities. This is then clearly evidenced and documented to enable assessors to evaluate your progress. SVQ training provides a robust, educational background and is a recognised qualification.
GETTING OUR VOICES HEARD

Inverness, Thursday 6th April 2017

Join us in:
✓ Sharing our experiences of disability to make positive changes to our community and its services.
✓ Working together to find ways to make it easier for disabled people to take part equally.
✓ Finding out how to get our views across to decision makers both locally and nationally.

We are especially interested to hear from disabled people and their organisations who identify with physical and sensory impairments, long term physical and mental health conditions and learning difficulties.

Where:
Smithton Church, Murray Road,
Smithton, IV2 7YU

When:
10.00am until 4.00pm

To book your place and discuss any access, transport and dietary requirements please call John on 07442 278 287 or email highlands@inclusionscotland.org
The Office Redesign Project in north Highland has reached a key stage. Here, project director Gordon MacDonałd explains how staff can get involved to help recycle unwanted furniture.

The Office Redesign Project is well underway towards achieving the goals of reducing our estate and costs. As part of this project, a large amount of furniture will be displaced. This furniture is of good quality but unfortunately of the wrong size and shape to allow a different working office environment, and larger occupancy, of the remaining buildings.

A prioritised approach will be taken to meet our intentions to recycle at least 50 per cent of the 2,000 or more items being displaced. Teams across the whole organisation are asked to look at their current office furnishings and identify their needs for replacements. They are asked then to put their requests on Warp-It as this will ensure the highest priority of being met.

Staff based at Raigmore Hospital have already received an email to establish a level of demand and to allow us to gauge the range of items sought. So far, many items have been put on order and we are delivering these as they become available.

As word of the furniture displacement has spread we have seen an increase in staff requesting access to furniture for either working or studying at home, or on behalf of friends, family and neighbours. We are still working on the final details but we are recommending a donation of £5 per item.

NHS Highland seeks to support and be part of the communities we serve. To this end we are hopeful that staff spread the word to local businesses, good causes, churches, charities and schools to keep our communities thriving. Every item we can put to continued good use is a success – please help us to help others within your wider contacts and recycle as much as possible.

This is a great opportunity to utilise good quality furniture across a variety of locations and needs

So far we have delivered a number of items both internally to the business and have entered discussions to provide furniture to organisations as diverse as national charities, local schools and the Guiding Association.

For further information contact Gordon.macdonald1@nhs.net

OFFICE REDESIGN PROJECT

Office furniture recycled as part of redesign plans

NORTH COAST REDESIGN

Next steps set out

NHS HIGHLAND management met in Strathy with the steering group overseeing the redesign of services across the north coast of Sutherland this month.

The meeting on 24th March was the first since the board of NHS Highland approved plans to develop a community ‘Hub’ in the Kyle of Tongue area in January. Once the new arrangements are in place NHS Highland would no longer provide residential care home services currently provided at Caladh Sona (Talmine near Melness) or Melvich Community Care Unit, Sinclair Court.

At the meeting the next steps in the Business Case process were set out. There was further discussion around what facilities and services would be collocated with the Hub, as well as the key components. It was confirmed this would include beds, treatment room, and a capability to allow telemedicine.

There was recognition that while it was important to be ambitious about the facility this would need to be balanced with realism including the desire to progress as quickly as possible.

Area Manager for Caithness & Sutherland Michelle Johnstone who came into the role in June 2016 said she would be overseeing the redesign which will be delivered in partnership with the Highland Council.

She added: “Once we confirm the specification for the ‘Hub’ this will define the workforce, site requirements and costs.”

When asked about the how many beds the unit would have, Michelle responded: “We are working with our public health colleagues to look at the future needs to serve the local population. This will model a number of scenarios and allow the implications for costs and workforce to be considered. In part it will depend on the level of care at home, community services and local housing solutions available.”
SUPPORT GROUP

Social media success for secondary breast cancer group’s video

A VIDEO about the launch of a new group for people in Highland diagnosed with secondary breast cancer has proved a great success on social media.

So far it has been viewed more than five thousand times on Facebook alone.

The new group is a collaboration between NHS Highland and charity Breast Cancer Care.

The video was made to promote the group’s first meeting in the Highlands on Tuesday 28th March 2017 in the Centre for Health Science in Inverness.

Angeline MacLeod, NHS Highland Macmillan breast care nurse and one of the organisers, said: “Hearing that several women have registered through watching the video has made putting the video together all worthwhile.”

One of the group’s new members, Jane Steven, from Inverness, has been living with secondary breast cancer for eight years. For several of those years she has been travelling down to attend sessions at a similar group based in Glasgow.

She said: “I am delighted that there is to be a new group for people in Highland. The bottom line is you get the diagnosis and you are told it is incurable and your heart sinks, but here I am eight years further on.

“You realise there are a number of people in a similar situation who are living with the diagnosis. I’m not normally one of those people who join groups but for some reason after a couple of years I realised I had not spoken to anybody facing the same issues.

“As you live in such a limbo land to be able to hear from oncologists about new treatments or clinical research trials or to learn relaxation techniques you appreciate that people are ‘living’ and it encourages you.

“I’d say to anyone come along with an open mind to see what the group can offer.”

Another of the organisers, NHS Highland Macmillan breast care nurse, Karen Daltrey added: “We are looking forward to meeting everyone on the day. These sessions will allow you to talk openly to others who have had a secondary diagnosis, and to get information and support in a relaxed environment.

“Although it can’t be cured, secondary breast cancer can be treated and as treatments have improved, more and more people are living longer after being diagnosed so being able to have a group like this for people in Highland will be a great support.”

To register your interest in the group with Breast Cancer Care, and/or if you know anyone who is affected by secondary breast cancer, contact: 0345 077 1893 or email: secondaryservices@breastcancercare.org.uk

Video

Watch the video on the new Highland group for people with secondary breast cancer here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P1hW-TE_o-Y

CAITHNESS GENERAL

Specsavers came to us instead

CAITHNESS GENERAL Hospital has received ten pairs of test specs from a local opticians to help staff conduct children’s eye tests.

Specsavers in Wick donated ten pairs of the special frames, which are used during eye examinations to test different lenses on patients to help determine the correct prescription.

The glasses come in a range of sizes depending on the age of the child and will better fit the hospital's younger patients.

Ian Morris, store director of Specsavers in Wick, said: “We were contacted by staff at the hospital who wanted to find out where we purchased our test specs after one of its optometrists had visited our store.

“Rather than just refer them on, we decided to assist by donating the glasses to the hospital. We work closely with the team there and were only too happy to help out.”

Stanley Keys, optometrist at Caithness General Hospital, pictured above left, added: “We’d like to thank Specsavers for its very kind donation.

“The trial frames will be a huge help when conducting children’s eye tests – as well as being smaller, they are brightly coloured which will assist us in holding youngsters’ attention and making the experience more fun for them.”
THE BOARD WALK

OPEN TO ANYONE FROM NHS HIGHLAND

30 MINUTE WALKING SESSION

GET ACTIVE

BE MORE PRODUCTIVE

ENJOY SOME NETWORKING

COME AND WALK WITH COLLEAGUES FROM THE NHS HIGHLAND BOARD

WHEN
30th January - 10am
21st February – 11am
27th March – 11am
25th April – 11am
29th May – 11am
29th August – 11am
25th September – 11am
24th October – 11am
27th November – 11am

WHERE
Front Door, Assynt House, NHS Highland
DUNBAR HOSPITAL

Staffing level concerns affect unit

THE MINOR INJURIES UNIT at Dunbar Hospital in Thurso had to close temporarily because of staffing pressures.

The shutdown of the Minor Injuries Unit (MIU) on the weekend starting Saturday 18th March was because of safety concerns over the lack of qualified nursing staff.

The unit – comprising the MIU and the Out-of-Hours GP service at the hospital – resumed a restricted hours service from 8am - 8pm the following Monday morning before re-starting full operations on Wednesday 23rd March.

Michelle Johnstone, NHS Highland’s area manager covering Caithness and Sutherland, said: “I can confirm that, as of Wednesday, we have been able to return the MIU at Dunbar back to its normal 24/7 service. However, we still need to recruit qualified nursing staff and so, until that happens, we shall be carefully monitoring staffing levels to ensure that we always provide a safe service.

“I would like to remind the public that the MIU at Dunbar does not deal with anything serious or life threatening. That level of care is, and always has been, provided at Caithness General Hospital.”

She added: “I am grateful to the staff at unit for helping us to fully re-open so quickly, and I apologise to all concerned for any inconvenience.”

Despite advertising the posts since before Christmas, there have been problems recruiting staff with the necessary qualifications. The board has renewed its efforts by re-advertising the posts.

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BOOK LAUNCH

Origin of Inverness hospitals explored

THE ORIGIN and development of hospitals in Inverness was the subject of a book launch held in Inverness this month (March).

The History of Highland Hospitals Project, which was set up by father and son Jim and Steve Leslie in 2008, launched their latest book “The Hospitals of Inverness” to a capacity crowd in the city’s Town House.

The book, which is the fourth in the series, gives a fascinating insight into a number of institutions that used to provide healthcare across the Highlands in days gone by.

Professor Steve Leslie, consultant cardiologist for NHS Highland, said: “Since we started the project researching the history of Highland hospitals over 60 institutions have been rediscovered in the area through local and national archives, local knowledge and newspapers. “We’re hoping as many people as possible engage with the book and respond with information that we might not have which we could use to find out more about the area.”

David Alston, chair of NHS Highland, spoke at the event and also wrote the foreword for the book.

He said: “As an historian I have a particular interest in the social history of the Highlands. Steve and Jim’s continuing history of Highland hospitals is not only about the buildings and the services they provided but takes a broad approach, illuminating many aspects of life in the Highlands. It is a pleasure to be able to combine my role as chair of NHS Highland with that of an historian in writing an introduction to this volume.”

For further information contact Jim Leslie on leslies@tesco.net or on 01381 620412 / 07754123994; or Steve Leslie on Stephen.leslie@nhs.net.
MEDICAL EDUCATION

Conference success

DELEGATES FROM across the North of Scotland attended a packed NHS Highland Medical Education Conference.

The conference, held in Inverness on Friday 31st March was aimed at those delivering medical education at undergraduate and postgraduate level with a wide variety of sessions and workshops held throughout the day.

Dr Emma Watson, director of medical education for NHS Highland explained the theme of the conference – high quality medical education supporting the right people to deliver high quality care – had proved to be very popular, with a waiting list for places.

She said: “We had a full programme showcasing the breadth of medical education activity here in the Highlands and I was delighted to also have international guests this year from Norway and Finland and Roger Strasser from the Northern Ontario School of Medicine in Canada.

“We had a number of workshops on the day delivered by our partners in education delivery from the University of Aberdeen, University of Dundee, the University of Glasgow and the University of the Highlands and Islands as well as NHS Education for Scotland, our own faculty and international guests.

“The workshops included a review of medical education in Norway and Iceland that provided us with a great opportunity to learn from our colleagues in Europe. We also shared information on the Longitudinal Clerkship, a pilot programme educating fourth year medical students primarily in the community – flipping medical education on its head as the students don’t rotate through traditional blocks but learn-based on the patients they encounter over the year.”

Dr Watson added: “The aim of the clerkship is to produce doctors who are more empathetic, better at managing risk but also more comfortable working in general practice and rural areas.

Other workshops on the day included ‘mentoring’, ‘what does it mean to be a doctor?’ and ‘supporting medical students’. There was also a session welcoming the future of medical education in honour of Miss Sarah Prince, a former consultant at Belford Hospital in Fort William who sadly passed away last year.

Emma said: “Sarah was deeply committed to the support and development of trainees and colleagues and it seems fitting that six medical students and doctors in training used this session to present to the audience.

“We were also delighted to welcome Dr Roger Strasser as our key note speaker at the conference. Roger is the Professor of Rural Health and Dean of Northern Ontario School of Medicine and has a wealth of knowledge and experience which he will be able to share with us.”

THE SMART charity - which works in partnership with the Highland Alcohol and Drug Partnership – trained the eight volunteers alongside 12 other participants from across Highland to become SMART peer facilitators.

SMART Recovery is a science-based programme to help people manage their recovery from any type of addictive behaviour. This includes addictive behaviour with substances such as alcohol, nicotine or drugs, or compulsive behaviours such as gambling, sex, eating, shopping, self-harming and so on.

This was the second time that HMP Inverness hosted the Self-Managing And Recover Training (SMART) peer facilitator event. The training was delivered by Trish Allen, national co-ordinator SMART Scotland (Back row right) and Frank Bodde, national co-ordinator SMART Denmark (Back row left).

WICK

Residents to be settled in community

RESIDENTS OF a learning disability care home in Wick are to be settled within the community in order to provide them with a future in a more sustainable ‘homely’ environment.

The move follows an assessment of the Grant Street home by NHS Highland senior health & social care professionals and management.

The recommendation to move the four residents recognises that the home is failing to meet both government and NHS Highland policies on person-centred accommodation for people with complex learning and behavioural needs.

The move into community accommodation is aligned with the goals of the NHS Scotland Health Care Quality Strategy. The strategy has a greater focus on addressing the health inequalities experienced by people with learning disabilities and calls for a cultural shift in the way they are supported by services and society.

Mike Flavell, NHS Highland’s district manager for Caithness, said: “We accept that the resident and staff accommodation and supporting facilities are too cramped and that the layout of the facility was not conducive to providing a ‘homely’ environment for residents.”

One of Grant Street’s primary roles is to prepare service users for community living. The home had proved successful in this, providing a programme geared to the needs of the service user and aimed at developing life skills such as food preparation, personal hygiene maintenance and budgeting etc.

Lately the unit had been used to home people with longer-term care needs.

The Caithness N&W Operation Unit recently moved 21 residents from Forse House learning disability residential unit into community settings and successfully integrated the residents into community life.
Staff praised for high quality care at home

LOCHBROOM HOUSE received a glowing report from the Care Inspectorate (CI) highlighting the consistent provision of high quality care at the Ullapool care home after an unannounced visit earlier this year.

A spot check on 2nd February 2017 in two categories - Quality of care and support; and Quality of management and leadership – saw the home for up to 11 residents receive ‘very good’ grades 5’s across the board.

This matched ‘very good’ grades in the same categories following a previous visit by the independent regulator of social care and social work services a year earlier in February 2016.

Lochbroom House manager, Lisa Macdonald, said: “We are absolutely delighted. All the staff very much deserve the recognition of these ‘very good’ grades.

“We are a dedicated team in everything we do here at Lochbroom House, which enhances the care and wellbeing for each of our residents. The staff take pride in providing a warm and friendly environment, something which we are all very proud of.”

NHS Highland’s area manager, Kate Earnshaw, said: “We have a fantastic team of staff who are really dedicated and provide excellent care.”

The CI report said: “We found that a good standard of care and support was being provided. People looked well cared for, and those we spoke with felt that staff responded appropriately to any unmet needs or requests for assistance.”

There were no recommendations or requirements made as a result of the visit and two categories: the Quality of staffing; and Quality of environment; were not inspected this time. For the full report go to the CI website.

HEALTH PROMOTION

AN NHS Highland health promotion specialist has thanked staff for their hard work in contributing to the Health Promoting Health Service Annual Report for 2015/16.

The Health Promotion Health Service (HPHS) aims to create hospital settings that enable and promote good health through a range of actions that enhance patient clinical care, support staff health and wellbeing and influence the physical hospital environment.

NHS Highland’s health improvement specialist, Beverley Green, said: “On behalf of NHS Highland I want to thank everyone for all their hard work in contributing to the HPHS Annual Report.

“The report captured innovative practice carried out throughout NHS Highland and the board received positive feedback from the Scottish Government.

“It’s clear that a small change can make a big difference and every healthcare contact is a health improvement opportunity. This was the overall theme from the HPHS chief medical officer’s letter to boards in 2015, which included a monitoring framework encompassing hospital policy that is reported to the Scottish Government each year.”

Beverley continued: “The HPHS annual report from all NHS boards in Scotland contributed to national policy. We are very grateful to everyone in NHS Highland for all their hard work and support.

“I would encourage colleagues who have been involved in innovative practice in Highland, or if they’re planning any programmes of work, to get in touch with me to capture your hard work.”

To find out more contact Beverley Green on Beverley.green1@nhs.net or susanbirse@nhs.net.

ULLAPOOL
A STAFF member from Raigmore Hospital in Inverness described as “a beacon of light” is the latest recipient of a Highland Quality Approach award.

Barista assistant, Aaron Habberley, who has worked at Raigmore since 2011 in the hospital’s main entrance coffee bar, has been praised by both staff and members of the public for continually going that extra mile.

Nominated by line manager hotel services manager Crawford Howat, Aaron has been described as a “very friendly, approachable and helpful person who does everything with a smile”, doing what he can to “ensure people are treated with dignity, respect and feel at ease in his company”.

The nomination continues: “in the NHS it takes staff from all departments to make up the dedicated team of health care professionals who will have an input in the lives of all those who pass through our door. Aaron epitomises how important customer care is and the impact it has on individuals”.

Members of the public have also noticed the exceptional customer care delivered by Aaron, especially as he recognises that some visitors are at a vulnerable time in their life.

Aaron has been described as “extremely helpful, polite and warm, in what can be a very trying time for customers” and “a credit to the establishment”. Through his attitude and manner he has been described as “a beacon of light during what started off as a dark time”.

One member of the public praised Aaron’s “exceptional customer care” especially for dealing with one sensitive situation “in a very sympathetic way”.

Nominations for HQA awards can be made by staff, patients, carers and the wider public for an individual or team employed by NHS Highland.

MACKENZIE CENTRE

Weekly cafe started to provide carers with their own chill out area

THE MACKENZIE Centre together with Connecting Carers opened a cafe in the Inverness-based resource centre this month.

The More About Carers (MAC’s) Cafe provides an ideal platform for those who care for a loved one to relax, meet fellow carers and take some time to focus on themselves.

Centre manager Kathy Martin said: “We have been working closely with Connecting Carers to develop MAC’s and we are delighted to be able to support carers to have some time to unwind, meet friends and enjoy some light refreshment.

“We held an open day for all carers to come along and sample MAC’s. The cafe will feature a warm, friendly atmosphere for carers to take a well earned break for a couple of hours. A programme of events will be arranged based on what carers would like to do while they are at MAC’s.

“The added bonus is that if the person who is being cared for is aged over 60 they can attend day services while the carer has a break in the cafe. However, I would encourage carers to book a space in advance as numbers to attend day services are limited.”

The open day at MAC’s was held on Thursday, 23rd March. The cafe will open every Tuesday morning between 10am and 12pm.

The nomination continues: “in the NHS it takes staff from all departments to make up the dedicated team of health care professionals who will have an input in the lives of all those who pass through our door. Aaron epitomises how important customer care is and the impact it has on individuals”.

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Scottish Health Council issues new newsletter

THE FIRST issue of the Scottish Health Council’s (SHC) e-Connect newsletter for 2017 is an ‘Our Voice’ special.

‘Our Voice’ is all about engaging the people of Scotland to make health and social care better and is for everyone who wants to get involved.

The SHC will be launching a brand new ‘Our Voice’ website in the next couple of months. It will be a platform for sharing information and good practice from across Scotland and there will also be lots of opportunities to get involved and share patient stories and feedback through interactive tools such as questionnaires, forums and quick polls. Read more in the newsletter here.

Return plea for walking aids

MEMBERS OF the public are being asked to look around their house, garage and loft for any crutches, zimmer walking frames or walking sticks that they have been given by the NHS that are now no longer needed.

Dr Susan MacGregor, occupational therapy and physiotherapy service manager at Raigmore Hospital, is urging people who no longer use this equipment to return them to the hospital.

She said: “Walking aids are frequently lent out to patients to use during their rehabilitation but they should be returned to us once they are no longer needed, so that we can give them to other patients who need them.

We know from previous experience that when patients need to use crutches or other equipment they don’t let it out of their sight but as soon as they’re back on their feet again they forget that they’ve still got these things. Some people stumble over them when they’re moving house and some people just never get round to bringing them back.

A NURSE from NHS Highland has been named IBD nurse of the year at this year’s final of the British Journal of Nursing (BJN) Awards.

David Armour, lead advanced nurse IBD (Inflammatory Bowel Disease) for NHS Highland, was nominated by Crohn’s and Colitis UK.

The awards recognise and celebrate the individuals who go above and beyond in delivering care and were held earlier this month.

Speaking before the awards in London, Isobel Mason from Crohn’s and Colitis UK said that the charity initially encouraged members of the public to contact their local health board explaining the value of the IBD Specialist nursing role and, if they liked, why their local service was so important to them.

Isobel said: “The IBD nursing service at Raigmore Hospital received more responses than any other service in the UK, highlighting just how valued it is by those who use it.

“In the comments received David has been described as ‘amazing’ with one patient saying they ‘would never had made it through the hardest time of my life without him’. It’s a fantastic achievement and recognises the quality and innovative nature of the work he is doing. He really deserves it.”

David Armour, lead advanced nurse IBD, said: “I am absolutely honoured and delighted to receive this award. What we do is very much a team effort and this highlights the excellent IBD team that we have here in NHS Highland.

“It’s great to hear such complimentary things said about you and it is good to know that the work we all do is both appreciated and recognised by our patients.”

Iona McGauran, lead nurse for Raigmore Hospital, said: “I am delighted to hear that David has been awarded such a prestigious award which acknowledges the fantastic work he does every day with patients.

“There is no one more deserving of such an award and David epitomises the real meaning of person centred care in every sense.”

Mythbusting back pain

Back pain is not caused by bones or joints being ‘out of place’ or ‘your pelvis being out of alignment’.

Physiotherapist Lesley Marshall says for the vast majority of people with back pain, scans do not show any evidence of discs or joints being ‘out of place’.

Find out more by booking her Myth Busting Back Pain Campaign Presentation.

For more information contact Lesley Marshall OH Physio lesley.marshall2@nhs.net or Michelle Smith OH Physio michelle.smith9@nhs.net xtn 4499.
Going green proves to be great success

NHS HIGHLAND adopted innovative sharing platform Warp-It in October last year.

Dubbed an “internal eBay” the service enables staff to place items of equipment they don’t need onto the website, and interested parties can get in touch once they have registered.

So far, NHS Highland has made a saving on over £35,000 and saved over 3,000 kilograms of waste and 10,000 kilograms of CO2.

The team at Warp-It caught up with NHS Highland’s environmental and sustainability support manager, Ruth Innes, to ask why the service has proved so popular in the north of Scotland.

Q. How did you raise awareness of Warp-It internally?
A. I approached our communications team and they were keen to help spread a good news story. I asked if they could do an initial story about the Warp-It reuse system and they were very supportive. That’s just over a year now. We weren’t sure how it would go and I said at the time if we saved £12,000 in our first year we would be absolutely delighted. We’ve completely smashed that target; we’re sitting at £38,000 as we speak. We are delighted with the response from our staff, who have really got involved in reuse.

Q. How have you managed to get so many staff interested?
A. Word of mouth, really. We have a waste management steering group and a carbon sustainability group that meet quarterly, and we use these groups to promote the system further.

I think our staff are very aware of the financial restrictions placed on every board right now. Obviously there’s pressure on every department to save money and I think people are far more careful about what they’re ordering. I think people are quite savvy with what they do now to make the resources stretch a little bit further.

Q. Have you seen a change in mentality during your time at NHS Highland?
A. I think people want to recycle/reuse now and there are websites like Gumtree and eBay and others that people are generally comfortable and familiar with. Perhaps the attitude used to be shoving old items in the skip or taking it to the dump, but I think people are more aware and better educated now.

People don’t want to be wasteful these days and the majority of our staff are very loyal to NHS Highland’s mission and don’t want to be wasting money on new equipment when they don’t have to.

Q. Do you have any tips or advice for people who are rolling out the Warp-It system?
A. I think it’s a good idea to go through the whole process in stages. It’s very dependent on what your organisation is like, and if you’ve got a good feel for what staff will think of it. I know our staff are really good at recycling and are really behind the idea — so we were confident the system would work.

Q. Do you have any other tips or advice for people who are rolling out the Warp-It system?
A. Our transport team have been a massive help, it simply wouldn’t have worked without them. They have been absolutely fantastic and our guys are shipping stuff around as part of their normal run. Before I did anything else, I spoke to the transport manager and told him what we wanted to do and asked his opinion — the team were right behind it from the start.

Q. Did you have any other departments on board from day one?
A. We took advice from health and safety on staff moving furniture and also procurement were involved in the beginning and continue to encourage staff to use Warp-It before ordering.

NHS Highland’s Research, Development and Innovation department is to hold a one day course on “Searching for, Retrieving and Managing Research Literature”.

The course will be held in the Library Training Room in the Centre for Health Science, Old Perth Road, Inverness, on Thursday 27th April 2017 from 10 am to 4 pm.

Course presenter, Frances Hines, Research, Development & Innovation (RD&I) Manager, said: “This one day literature searching course is designed to help provide medical staff, nurses, pharmacists, allied health professionals, and health service researchers with the knowledge and skills to conduct and manage focused searches of a variety of healthcare literature databases.

“A particular focus of this course will be making use of the literature search facilities available via the NHS Knowledge Network. Hands-on experience will allow participants to have the opportunity to construct, run and manage a search for specific literature pertinent to their current needs and interest on the day. Previous literature searching experience is not required.

“The NHS has procured a number of resources available to all NHS staff via the NHS Knowledge Network. This service provides access to a number of different services via the Dialog interface. These include MEDLINE, EMBASE, CINAHL, and PsycINFO, with links to full-text articles available via Proquest and Ebsco.

“As an NHS employee, you should have free access to the Knowledge Network and, therefore, be in possession of a user name and password, it is essential that you have this prior to attending the training. University of Stirling login is also required, for this reason we will need to know if you would like to attend this course by 13th April 2017 to allow time to create logins.

If you would like to apply for this course and have access to the NHS Intranet, an application form can be found on the RD & I page which is under the heading ‘Staff’. Otherwise email chloe.thomson2@nhs.net
GETTING OUR VOICES HEARD

Wick, Tuesday 18th April 2017

Join us in:
✓ Sharing our experiences of disability to make positive changes to our community and its services.
✓ Working together to find ways to make it easier for disabled people to take part equally.
✓ Finding out how to get our views across to decision makers both locally and nationally.

We are especially interested to hear from disabled people and their organisations who identify with physical and sensory impairments, long term physical and mental health conditions and learning difficulties.

Where:
Pulteney Centre, Huddart Street,
Wick, KW1 5BA

When:
10.00am until 4.00pm

To book your place and discuss any access, transport and dietary requirements please call John on 07442 278 287 or email highlands@inclusionscotland.org
THROMBOSIS UK is holding a series of conferences across the UK to mark National Thrombosis Week.

The Scottish conference will take place in Glasgow on Tuesday, 2nd May and feature presentations from NHS Scotland patient safety representatives and is free of charge for all healthcare professionals to attend.

The conference, chaired by Dr Julia Anderson, will be held in the Light House in Glasgow and provides a full day of learning, discussion and update across the broad spectrum of thrombosis care.

This includes prevention and management of thrombosis in pregnancy and postpartum, women’s health, hospital patients, cancer associated thrombosis and management of therapies and patient psychological health.

The conference will have local and national experts presenting and will be interactive to encourage sharing, questions and discussion.

Click here to find out more.

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FOURTH YEAR medical students met with MSP David Stewart this month to talk about their experience of a pilot project between NHS Highland, NHS Dumfries and Galloway and the University of Dundee.

The longitudinal clerkship is looking at delivering a significant change in medical education to promote general practice and ensure these new doctors are comfortable both in community and hospital settings.

This partnership sees fourth year medical students based in general practice for five to six sessions a week and spending the rest of the week in secondary care or other community settings.

Dr Emma Watson, director of medical education for NHS Highland and Dr Penny Lockwood, honorary senior clinical lecturer for Dundee University explained the clerkship has been developed mainly due to its educational value in creating excellent doctors but also to help address recruitment issues in General Practice and rural areas.

Dr Watson said: “What we are aiming to do is match the education of medical students to where healthcare is delivered and create a better understanding of healthcare in rural areas.

“We want to increase the students’ interest in General Practice as a career and provide them with a positive community-based educational experience.”

Dr Lockwood added: “Longitudinal clerkships have been successfully delivered in Australia, Canada and the USA and have been shown to enable students to become more involved in patient care and lead to a more patient centred approach.

“There is evidence that students who have attachments in rural areas are more likely to work in these settings. There is also good evidence that students who have a positive experience in their GP attachments are more likely to choose that speciality as a career.”

Mr Stewart, who represents the Highlands and Islands, said he was keen to find out more about the new project.

He said: “The fact that they get a taste of general practice, as well as secondary care and community settings, is really excellent. I am acutely aware of GP recruitment problems and this is another way of bringing home to students what could be on offer to them when it comes to healthcare in our communities.”

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Pictured left to right are: David Stewart MSP; Iona Robertson; Jordan Wardrope; Lewis Mundell; Blair Wallace; and Lean-Lik Ng.
An NHS Highland pharmacist has realised a long held ambition after successfully completing a PhD in Palliative Care.

Alison MacRobbie, (pictured) Macmillan palliative and community care pharmacist, self-funded her PhD which she started in June 2010 at Lancaster University. She was one of the first groups of students to take part in this new programme.

She said: “This was something I had wanted to do for a while and I’m obviously delighted that all the hard work put in has been worth it.”

Alison completed her studies, research and write up in her own time and her research into her chosen field has resulted in poster presentations at conferences both on an international basis and locally.

Findings from the research also helped Alison with exploratory research she was leading during this time within her substantive role in Skye and Lochalsh looking at ‘Developing a Model for Pharmaceutical Palliative Care in Rural Areas—Experience from Scotland’ and the work also extends findings gathered from Alison’s own research idea which resulted in a collaboration with Robert Gordon University on ‘Access to medicines in remote and rural areas: a survey of residents in the Scottish Highlands & Western Isles’.

Alison is quick to acknowledge the support she had throughout her research such as Dr Frances Hines, Highland research and development manager who was sponsor for the research. She is also incredibly grateful to participants who agreed to be interviewed for this study and to the GPs and specialist nurses who recruited patient participants to the research.

Alison added: “My thanks also to professional colleagues who participated in the deliberative panel and to specialist colleagues from the Scottish Palliative Care Pharmacy Association who reviewed and piloted questionnaires and processes.

“A special commendation should also go to my daughter Catherine, a medical and botanical artist, who provided specially commissioned illustrations for the thesis and to family and friends for tolerating my absence.”

“I haven’t quite got to the bit about feeling a sense of achievement yet. It was hard work so I’m currently quite relieved at having completed and looking to regain some spare time and balance back into my life.”

This was something I had wanted to do for a while and I’m obviously delighted that all the hard work put in has been worth it.
STUDENT EXCHANGE

‘Flying visit’ for Austrian nurses

NHS HIGHLAND and the University of Stirling Highland Campus welcomed four nursing students from Austria this month giving them an opportunity to compare and contrast their own healthcare system with that of Scotland.

The students from the Paracelsus University in Salzburg were here for two weeks and participated in a programme of lectures, discussions and observations. They also had the chance to explore research activities on the Highland Campus.

Irene Murray, lecturer in the Faculty of Health Sciences and Sport at the University of Stirling, explained the full programme for the group not only allowed them to meet local nursing students but also gave them an insight into some of the clinical care innovations being made at Raigmore Hospital.

She said: “We were encouraging the students to expand their knowledge in the field of nursing by comparing the differences and similarities between the two universities and visits to clinical areas within Raigmore have been arranged as part of their programme.

“Following a general induction they were able to move on to insight visits in ward areas which included the Stroke Unit, Macmillan Suite, Pre-assessment Unit, Coronary Care Unit, Emergency Department as well as the Highland Hospice.”

The students also got to meet up with local nursing students during their two week stay and a visit to Paracelsus University has already been arranged for four students from Stirling University, including one from the Highland Campus.

Pictured left to right are: Melanie Kaltenbrunner; Kathrin Keck; Julia Carbonari; and Marina Habersatter

Volunteers needed to raise awareness of vital health screening programmes

NHS HIGHLAND is to run a pilot project to recruit volunteers in and around Muir of Ord to help raise awareness of the importance of health screening programmes.

In addition, the board is actively encouraging people to take part in four adult screening programmes: bowel, breast cervical and abdominal aortic aneurysm (AAA).

NHS Highland’s health improvement specialist Jane Chandler, said: “Screening aims to identify people who are at risk of having a particular disease or medical condition before they show any signs of having it.

“Early detection enables early treatment which can make a real difference to people’s chance of survival.

“On top of that, the pilot is looking to recruit volunteers living in the Muir of Ord area to help us find out more about recruiting in a typical Highland community.

“I would encourage anyone who enjoys meeting new people and has some time to spare to please get in touch about becoming a Screening Awareness Volunteer.”

The role will involve attending events, clubs and community groups to pass on key messages about cancer screening and
manning information stands throughout the local area.

Mrs Chandler continued: “Volunteers do not need any medical knowledge or experience; we just ask that they are enthusiastic, committed and willing to learn. Volunteers will receive training, information and support to help carry out the role effectively. NHS Highland will also pay travel expenses to any activities that volunteers may attend, and volunteers can opt out at any time.”

For a full role description and more information contact Jane Chandler on: jane.chandler3@nhs.net. Further information is available here.
BIG HEARTED volunteers took to the streets of Helensburgh to highlight the theme for Scotland’s Breathing Space Day - ‘52 weeks of Kindness’.

All ages in the community got involved - from the Helensburgh Youth Forum to Grey Matters, the senior citizen organisation, as well as volunteers from the Dementia Resource Centre, the Welcome In and Visiting Friends - to encourage members of the public to carry out acts of kindness, and to continue to do this every week of the year.

The initiative was launched on National Breathing Space Day (1st February), an annual awareness day which urges people in Scotland to take some ‘breathing space’ and look after their mental wellbeing.

The ‘52 weeks of Kindness’ is part of a year-long programme of events led by Breathing Space, Scotland’s mental health helpline, in partnership with the Argyll and Bute Third Sector Interface (TSI) and other organisations across the country.

It aims to highlight that little acts of kindness can have positive effects on your own mental health, and the mental health of others.

Glenn Heritage, Chief Executive of Argyll and Bute TSI, said: “We work with thousands of volunteers across Argyll and Bute and we know that the work they do is good not just for their communities but for them as well because volunteering really promotes good mental health.

“So we are delighted to be involved in this campaign to inspire people to carry out random acts of kindness – it’s like volunteering in miniature.

“Whether it’s checking in on elderly neighbours over the winter months, passing along a good book you’ve read, or smiling and saying ‘Hello’ to someone new, we can all make that little bit of effort to brighten someone’s day.

“Research shows that being kind to others also has positive effects on our own mental health too.”

Breathing Space is a free telephone service where advisors offer care, compassion and advice over the phone to anyone feeling low, depressed or anxious. The service is open evenings and weekends on 0800 83 85 87.
AS REGULAR column readers know the Librarian, despite his bulky exterior is an outdoors type. Out on a recent bike spin he discovered an interesting route linking the UHI Campus with the Retail Park.

Out here he discovered a suite of buildings with interesting names – the NHS one bore the name John Dewar House. As ‘a loon from a small north east toon’ the Librarian is a bit of a nosy parker and he likes to find out about everything. He also likes to think of himself as a bit of a polymath. Both these traits, in his eyes, anyway, give him licence to speir (for the uninitiated - Doric for ask). Who then was John Dewar and what is his relevance to NHS Highland?

The Librarian also likes a tipple - he was brought up on peat from the teat. Early experiences with blended whisky for teething put him off the stuff for life - he much prefers malts. As he eased himself down on one of his office Harris Tweed Mackenzie Chairs (Barker and Stonehouse: £1598.99) for his afternoon cigar and dram he mused - was Dewar perchance something to do with the distilling industry?

A Christmas present of a book on malt whiskies led him to do a bit of delving and experimenting with various beverages over the holiday period. He found out from his festive tome that Dewars whisky was a blend of whiskies from various distilleries including Aberfeldy. Co-incidentally, on one of his rare forays out to the supermarkets he found a bottle of this brew on offer over at Tesco’s but was not too impressed by it.

Anyway back to John Dewar who the Librarian found out was indeed a bastion of the whisky industry. How did he get involved in health? Dewar at one stage of his career was an MP and represented Inverness-shire in the Commons for seventeen years between 1900 and 1917.

In 1912 he chaired the Dewar Commission (pictured) which examined the state of health care and its provision in the Highlands and Islands. The Librarian would have been quite at home in this illustrious company and surroundings. The work of the Commission led to the creation of the Highlands and Islands Medical Service which was itself a forerunner of the NHS in the UK.

The northern area is not the first to be at the cutting edge of health developments. In the early 1990s the Highland Health Sciences Library was at the forefront of making a case for 24/7 information access for all Scottish NHS staff (Enabling access to the knowledge base of healthcare: library and information provision for the NHS in Scotland). It was all very well having a network of health libraries in Scotland but these were not much good if their resources were only accessible by person.

What was needed was an electronic resource which made information accessible to all no matter what time of day, day of the week, or where you were located in Scotland.

These proposals went to the Scottish Government and the outcome was the NHS Scotland eLibrary – which has developed into the current Knowledge Network (KN). Keen followers of the KN will note that from 27th March this is going to look slightly different as it moves into a new phase of development.

This provides an improved electronic suite of resources for all NHS and social care staff so they can keep their practice up to date through a range of educational and informational resources.

Thus in the Knowledge Network you can find full text articles and books, course details, on-line courses and a range of clinical decision support tools.

The range is almost endless and for items that are not on the Network there is a document delivery service which will scour the country to try to locate what you need.

Local library services are the key to joining all these resources together and the Highland Health Sciences Library is proud to be part of this network and one of its originators.

Remember, whatever your needs the Highland Health Sciences Library exists to help you. Save time and money. Don’t spend more than 10 minutes on a problem you may be having – contact the library instead. To find out more about the library call 01463 255600 (x7600).
What’s your job description, Demi?
I work part time within the “Supporting Self Management Service” which aims to equip people with skills to better self manage their mental health. I am also a staff nurse in Clava Ward at New Craigs Hospital, which is a dementia assessment ward.

How would you describe yourself?
I am a warm and open-minded person with an empathetic nature and a love for learning and growing both personally and professionally.

Do you have any hobbies and interests?
Sports (mainly hockey), exploring the great Highland wilderness with my Labrador, Madden, and taking photos. I am currently attempting to learn Italian.

What was the first single you ever bought?
Beyonce - Crazy in Love

Your favourite food?
Homemade wood-fired pizza

And your favourite film?
About Time

What about your favourite T.V. programme?
BBC’s Sherlock

Do you have a favourite book?
Yes. ‘The Shepherdess of Siena’ by Linda Lafferty

If you won £10 million in the lottery, what would you spend it on?
I would donate a sum to charities, buy a VW campervan for my parents, get a nice wee cottage in the countryside for myself, and - in keeping with the Italian theme - I would purchase a farmhouse to renovate in Tuscany complete with an olive grove and vineyard, for the whole family to enjoy for years to come!

What about a smaller sum; £1,000?
Idealistically, I would holiday somewhere lovely, but realistically I should really stick it in my savings!

What are you pet hates?
When you are finishing packing your bags in a shop, trying to receive your change and receipt from the cashier to put away safely in your purse and the next person is standing on top of you, all at the same time.

If you could have dinner with three people, dead or alive, who would they be and what would you cook them?
Dalai Lama, Jim Carrey and Sherlock Holmes played by Benedict Cumberbatch! I make a pretty mean chicken and chorizo risotto so it would have to be that and a chocolate praline tart for dessert.

What are the best and worst parts of your job?
In the Supporting Self Management Service, I have loved being involved in developing starting up a whole new service. It’s also great to be providing an intervention that is unlike anything in Scotland. In my job in the ward, I like working with older adults and speaking to them and their family about their lives as they have so much knowledge and wisdom to pass on. It’s also a great opportunity to be working across such a variety of mental health services. The worst part would be not always being able to provide full, comprehensive treatment packages for individuals who have complex needs.